

SONNETS

BY

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TO MOTHER.

Not bearing heavy loads on dreary ways;
Not shirking from the shrivelling glance of scorn;
Not casting on thy past a wistful gaze;
Not by distress and disappointment worn;
But spending joyful girlhood's cheerful days,
Now shaking bloom from lilac and from thorn;
Now chasing butterflies on flowery braes;
Now tasting fruit from twig or tendrile torn:—
I love to think of thee since thou art gone.
How wildly bursting heart and burning brain
Now wish each word unsaid, each deed undone,
That planted in thy heart a pang of pain!
How humbly penitence would pardon crave,
Had love the power to bring thee from thy grave!

TO THE SAME.

Sands gleam where torrents rushed or fountains ran;
From wave and wold died cooling winds away;
Perspiring brows attest the toil of man;
And drooping daisies nature's thirst betray.
But dews and darkness cool and zephyrs fan
The verdant fields parched by noon's ardent ray;
Refreshing showers restore their greener span
And cheer the flocks that on their herbage stray:
Thus heaven soothes aching nature's blistering pain
And healing balm pours on her festering wounds;
But for my blighted heart and blasted brain,
Nor soothing salve nor healing balm abounds;
With ceaseless anguish mold and mind shall glow;
No cooling palm shall press my burning brow.

TO THE SAME.

The flowery sheen of summer's laughing plain;
The warbled glee of summer's leafy glade;
The dawning blush of summer's eastern main;
In Memory's limbo are by winter laid.
Welcomed are with returning summer's reign
The joyous birds that sang in light and shade;
Rivers from winter's bondage free again;
And flowers for fields that winter flowerless made.
But when to homes death brings relentless pain
And kindred are in mourning weeds arrayed,
No melting spring will break his icy chain,
No summer's joy woe's winter will invade.
From Memory there is then no balm to gain,
And Sorrow can but weep and Love complain.

TO A LADY.

The tender dusk that darkens in the blue
While dazzling light to twinkling twilight trends;
The silvery drops that emerald verdure strew
Her bow when Iris round a sunshower bends;
The brightness and the blueness peaceful sky
Wears from the opening to the shutting flower;
The freshness of gales that for fragrance try
Flowers from their shutting to their opening hour:—
This prospect pleasing made when my heart's queen
Was not among its beauties vainly sought;
With charm that her enchantment lent the scene
Its rural sheen and sylvan shade were fraught;
I muse on perished pleasures under skies
That arch a disenchanting paradise.

TO THE SAME.

If won were through a wizard's waving wand
The warmest wish that haunts this heart of mine,
Love's language would in a romantic land
Flow from thy heart through those large eyes of thine;
To nightingale would nightingale reply
Among the bloom and foliage of their bower
In moonlight, with their mournful melody
Increasing in thy heart love's melting power;
Where chirping, trilling, twittering, warbling birds
In groves assembled would I stray with thee,
My darling, listening to thy low sweet words;
Less liquid tones from woods and waves winds free
When Zephyr wakes the whisper of the trees
And Auster wakes the murmur of the seas.

TO THE SAME.

Dowered, in the cheering dreams of joyless night,
With radiant robes and spotless innocence,
Thou comest to my cares with recompense
Of transport like the tumult of delight
Which broke the sleep of Echo when the sight
Of charms like thine on Adam's ravished sense
In Eden beamed; and then my heart looks hence
At places be thy presence filled with light;
At places where our hearts were glad and gay;
At places where our footprints in the woods
And on the mountain by the lake shore lay;
At places on which craving fancy broods;
At places where with thee to be to-day
Would from my heavy heart drive hopeless moods.

TO THE SAME.

One who would search the world from east to west
Richer and rarer roses could not see
Than flourished in the garden, where with me
She loitered whom of ladies I loved best;
Each bird to greet Aurora left her nest;
Of all the roses in that garden, she
The freshest and the fairest from the tree
Its weight bent plucked and placed upon my breast;
I when I lost it and she chid me stood
Perplexed, confused, confounded and abashed,
Till from the muse who as she pleases mood
Witless or witty gives an answer flashed:—
“ I of the giver thought so much that I
The gift forgot and lost,” was my reply.

TO THE SAME.

From Cairo to Beyrout one scorching day
I travelled with one who to me was dear;
A Jew with his throat cut from ear to ear
Lay bleeding at a cliff's base near our way;
That night asleep I in my lodgings lay,
But to my friend were thoughts of danger near;
Shades on a wall before his windows clear
In me showed an assassin's destined prey;
My comrade to my chamber seemed to fly,
The felon's purpose foiled and checked his blow;
I rose to curse the hand that turned awry,
What would in ethe's lake have drowned my woe;
Does he who loves thee, lady, long to die?
Yes! Life is worthless; thou hast made it so.

TO THE SAME.

Where sheeny bay was fringed by shady brake,
On sand or gravel side by side were set
Footprints that if I could I would forget;
The sunlit landscape and the moonlit lake
Witnessed delights from dreams of which I wake
To foster moods that nurse despair and fret,
Because love craves what it can never get;
Alas! My brain will burst, my heart will break;
Divinely beautiful those dark eyes are;
And how could I whose eyes no lies told thine
Imagine that those eyes but lies told mine!
Thy heart was of my heart the polar star,
And how could I whose heart no art concealed,
Imagine that thy heart but art revealed!

TO THE SAME.

Eyes that made fascinated hearts their sport,
Cheeks where through pink to vermeil crimsoned white,
And grace that glided less like gait than flight:—
My heart gave these besiegers open port.
They made the bitter sweet, the journey short,
The strife victorious, the burden light,
The task no toil and bright as day the night;
Then disenchanted the enchanted fort,
To sorrow's prison pleasure's garden changed,
The flowers of heaven turned to the weeds of hell
And laid in crumbling ruins the citadel
Surrender at discretion that arranged.
Yet victor wakes in victim throb and thrill;
Love in that heap of ruins dreams on still.

TO THE SAME.

Less painful is an ulcer than my heart;
It bleeds; it burns; would God that it would break!
Would God that I could sleep and never wake!
Or that a dagger pain and brain would part!
The works of nature and the works of art
Are to an organ that does nought but ache
Flowers whence that wasp can nought but poison take
But whence for joy's bee springs of honey start.
Yet it was wont to flit from flower to flower
And each corolla filled with honey find;
How came to pass the change to wasp from bee?
It came to pass through thy transforming power;
It had not happened had not love been blind;
'Twas not Calypso that I saw in thee.

TO THE SAME.

I droop like one who sees Medusa's head
And flesh to flint feels hardening by degrees;
A creeping numbness tortures freezing knees
And crawls into a heart whence vigor fled;
Medea could to life bring back the dead
And make eld's withered flesh youth's freshness sieze;
But no Medea could from stone release
One in whose gaze the gorgon's neck had bled.
Had I not gazed on thee I never had
Become that adamant men call despair;
I gazed on thee and none can make me glad,
Though some there are whose charms with thine compare;
Forever craving and forever sad
Is thought no beauty from thy spell can tear.

TO THE HON. H. B. RAINVILLE.

The greatest empire earth has ever seen—
Greatest in feats of intellect and arms;
Greatest in the abundance of the swarm;
Whose loyal fealty guards her king and queen;
Greatest in leagues of fixed or fluent green;
Greatest in statesmanship from tyranny's harms
That shields those thither lured by freedom's charms;
Greatest on land and water that has been—
In thee incarnate to her councils calls
Those liberal principles that made her great;
Patience and perseverance soon or late
With triumph crowned to vigor's lot that falls,
In thy career led to an envied place
A mind enthralled by neither creed nor race.

TO THE HON. H. ARCHAMBAULT.

Some from the homeless Hebrew's promised land;
Some from the autocratic Czar's domains;
Some from dens where the Turkish tyrant reigns;
Some from peaks where the pines of Lebanon stand;
Some from Spain's orange groves and breezes bland;
Some from soil whence the Greek subsistence gains;
Some from the Lombard peasant's cultured plains;
Some from the haughty mandarin's flower-fringed strand:
Flock neath the ample flag's protecting folds
That shields their rights and shelters them from wrongs;
To delicate tact thy difficult task belongs
In homes that standard free from danger holds
All these discordant elements to control
And mould them into one harmonious whole.

TO QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Thou who when England's martial power was low
Warriors and statesmen ruling prompted them
To snatch from Spain th' imperial diadem
And place it on Britannia's peerless brow,
Genius caught from thy soaring spirit's glow,
Inspired the muse with many a matchless gem
T' enrich a race that dared the tide to stem
Of tyranny bent on freedom's overthrow;
Large heart, broad mind, clear brain and foresight keen
For daring England, who from dauntless queen
Acquired them then, a realm thereafter won
Eclipsing to th' amazement of mankind,
What conquest under the command combined
Of Persia, Greece, Rome, Spain or Macedon.

A REVERIE.

Methinks adjuring spell, enchanting wand
And muttered incantation bring again
Before me those I loved and love in vain
And make me centre of that pleasing band;
Mid a domestic group I seem to stand
Where father, mother, sons and daughter train
The powers of gentle heart and cultured brain,
Girt with the comforts of a pleasant land;
With these a glorious group of girls I greet,
Whom here and there along life's way I met;
Whom now and then I thus together meet;
Of whom some loved and haply love me yet;
Who would what has been bitter have made sweet;
And whom I now remember with regret.

